



# Town of Groton, Connecticut

## Meeting Minutes

### Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road  
Groton, CT 06340-4394  
Town Clerk (860)441-6640  
Town Manager  
(860)441-6630

**Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Heather Sherman Bond, Kathryn M. Brown-Tracy, Catherine Kolnaski, Deborah B. Monteiro, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter**

**Tuesday, July 8, 2008**

**7:00 PM**

**Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1**

#### **REGULAR MEETING**

#### **1. CALL TO ORDER**

*Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.*

#### **2. ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Schmidt

Members Absent: Councilor Bond, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter

*Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.*

#### **3. Calendar and Communications**

*Councilor O'Beirne noted that the Charter Revision Commission met last night and completed a draft of a new charter, which was distributed to the Town Council. There will be a public hearing on July 14th at 7:00 p.m. at Town Hall Annex. The Committee would like to make a formal presentation to the Town Council on July 22nd. The report of the Committee and a draft of the new Charter are on the Town's web site.*

#### **4. Approval of Minutes**

##### **2008-0175 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)**

##### **RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole meeting of June 24, 2008 and July 1, 2008 are hereby accepted and approved.

**A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, to adopt.**

**The motion carried unanimously**

#### **5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

*None.*

#### **6. NEW BUSINESS**

##### **2008-0174 National Park Service - American Battlefield Protection Program**

##### **Discussed**

*Mayor Watson introduced Kevin McBride, Director of Research for the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center who then introduced his colleagues, Dave Naumec and Rahiem Eleazer. Mr. McBride distributed a PowerPoint presentation. Mr. McBride stated he needs the assistance of various Town governments and landowners on this important research project of national interest. Mr. McBride will be holding a series of public informational meetings to educate people on the project. Groton is the most important town that the group will be working with and the majority of sites are located here. Mr. McBride is seeking permission to do research on Town of Groton property and host a public informational meeting in Groton on August 20th, and would like the Town Council's endorsement of the project.*

Mr. McBride noted the Pequot War was a seminal event in colonial history. The National Park Service has a battlefield protection program designed to identify significant battlefields in America, and protect and preserve them as well as develop educational materials. This will be a five year process involving site identification and documentation, planning and consensus building, fieldwork, and interpretation and education. Mr. Naumec described the efforts associated with site identification and documentation. Mr. McBride noted that remote sensing and non-invasive testing are used in the fieldwork phase.

Mr. McBride reviewed a time line of the English-Pequot War which covered a two year period from August 1636 to September 1638 and involved sites in four states. The war was also a native-native conflict. Mr. McBride and Mr. Naumec provided an overview of the war. Mr. Eleazer noted a map of native communities and their alliances with the Pequots versus the English. The group has created a minute-by-minute time line of the war based on various accounts from each person's perspective.

An archeological survey of the top of Fort Hill was done in 1985 and a number of artifacts were found. The former location of the John Mason statue marked the south end of the Mystic Fort.

Mr. McBride emphasized that this project has no long term implications for property owners and participation is strictly voluntary.

Mr. Eleazer reviewed the dispersal of the Pequots after the Mystic Fort incident. There were 500 Pequots killed in the war and approximately 4,000 to 5,000 remaining that were scattered.

Mr. McBride presented a map showing areas of interest in Groton involving several hundred property owners. Because exact site locations are unknown, and refusals are anticipated, the group has identified a large area to examine. Mr. McBride noted that participation in the program is voluntary and land can not be taken. Landowners retain their rights and there are no restrictions placed on the land. Mr. McBride is looking for suggestions on the best way to educate the general public on this project. The public information meetings will hopefully generate questions, comments, and valuable historical and contemporary perspectives.

Mr. McBride asked for permission to conduct surveys on Town of Groton lands. First, a group would walk the property to assess the integrity of the land. There would be no archeological work (metal detection) until the next grant cycle in approximately one year. Mr. McBride asked the Town to host a public information meeting. Mayor Watson asked for periodic updates on what the group finds. Mr. McBride agreed that the project must include a constant engagement of the public.

Mr. McBride stated that he is trying to arrange a meeting with Director of Planning and Development Michael Murphy. Permission from property owners is needed not only to survey the property, but for more specific issues such as excavation, preservation, discussion of ownership issues etc. The goal is to do the work in as non-invasive a manner as possible.

Councilor Schmidt noted that the Mashantucket Pequot Museum is one of the most valuable tools to educate the public. Mr. McBride added that the group is considering developing traveling exhibits.

Councilor Brown-Tracy asked if the Mashantuckets will be involved in this process and Mr. McBride clarified that he is representing the Mashantuckets and the grant application was submitted by the Tribal Council.

Mr. McBride noted that the information collected is exempt from Freedom of Information which adds a layer of protection for the property owner.

Town Manager Oefinger outlined the steps that would need to be taken and noted to the Council the list of Town-owned properties identified for study by Mr. McBride. The Town Manager asked if the three milestones - walking the properties to do a cursory review, metal detection, and excavation -- can be done separately with updates to the Council in between. He suggested that one way to address residents' concerns is to seek approvals for each of the steps separately as a means to establish dialog and educate property owners along the way. Mr. McBride noted that there are separate grants for each phase. The first phase ends December 31st and will include identifying properties involved in Phase II along with obtaining permission of the property owners. If the group finds anything during the metal detection phase, they will have to do the excavation at that time. Mr. McBride stated he will clarify steps in each phase with the National Park Service. If excavation occurs, the group will restore the property to its original condition.

Mr. McBride will revise the letter to property owners based on the comments received, and ask the Town Council to review it. The Town Manager asked that the letter include a sample of the document that they are asking property owners to sign.

The consensus of the Council was to support hosting a public information meeting on August 20th.

Councilor Kolnaski left the meeting at 8:36 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Brown-Tracy, Councilor Monteiro, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr. and Councilor Schmidt

Members Absent: Councilor Bond, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter

**2008-0093**

### **Council Goalsetting**

#### **Discussed**

Discussion followed on how the goals will be accomplished. Councilor Monteiro suggested assigning the goals to a committee. Discussion followed and the following committees were identified to oversee the various goals:

1. Work to influence legislative policy... (Committee of the Whole)
2. Work with the Town Manager and Board of Education to reduce spending... (Finance)
3. Review, monitor, and implement as desired the Economic Development Strategic Plan and Plan of Conservation and Development... (Economic Development)
4. Encourage land use agencies to address the issues of clean air, etc... (Environment)
5. Periodically meet with land use agencies... (Committee of the Whole)
6. Develop and implement a Town-wide property maintenance code... (Committee of the Whole)
7. Support and participate in the various state and local committees working to protect the future of the U. S. Submarine Base... (Economic Development or Committee of the Whole)
8. Monitor the development of Phase II of the school improvement project... (Liaison Committee)
9. Consider the recommendations of the school reuse committees... (Education or Committee of the Whole)

A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

**2008-0105**

### **Tercentennial Legacy Playground - Update**

**Discussed**

*The playground opened on Thursday, July 3rd and is already well-used. A formal dedication will be scheduled in the near future. The Town Manager encouraged Councilors to stop by the playground and noted that the community should be very proud of the facility.*

**7. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List**

*None.*

**8. OTHER BUSINESS**

*The July 15th meeting of the Town Council was canceled. A special meeting with the Permanent School Building Committee and Board of Education will take place on July 17th at 6:00 p.m., followed by a special meeting of the Town Council at 7:00 p.m.*

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

*A motion was made by Councilor Schmidt, seconded by Councilor Monteiro, to adjourn the meeting at 8:54 p.m.*

*The motion carried unanimously.*